



HERE’S TO OUR HEALTH!
RESOLVING TO HAVE A HAPPIER, HEALTHIER NEW YEAR

By Mayor Gene Winstead

The City is kicking off 2012 with a resolution to build a healthier community. What does a healthy Bloomington look like? It starts with providing opportunities to increase physical activity and offering healthier food options to make healthy choices easier and part of our everyday lives. A healthy Bloomington is also strong financially.

The past few months, the City has been working with Richfield, Edina and Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) of Minnesota on a new initiative to remove barriers to healthy living in our communities and support people in their efforts to be healthier. The *do.town* initiative focuses on preventing illness caused by unhealthy eating and physical inactivity with the goal of creating a healthier Bloomington where people can thrive.

We’ve already begun our journey. Because the City is financially healthy, we can provide resources and services such as new pedestrian and bike trails along East Bush Lake Road and portions of 86th Street, a successful Farmers Market, community gardens and more.

In 2008, the City implemented the Alternative Transportation Plan, which encourages walking and biking and increases quality of life for all Bloomington residents. The plan includes recommendations for building more trails and improving existing trails, walkways and other pedestrian-level infrastructure. In addition, the City Council passed an ordinance to reduce traffic congestion and pollution, and to encourage active forms of transportation such as biking, walking and using transit.

The City passed a Complete Streets resolution to support statewide efforts.

We are currently looking at creating a Complete Streets policy and program for the City. We are also looking at ways to offer healthier food choices at City concession stands and events.

Through community partnerships and grants from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) led by Bloomington Public Health with leaders in Edina and Richfield, we’ve been able to support active living by installing more bike racks around the city and healthy eating by expanding community gardens, providing workshops and helping childcare centers adopt healthy habits. The City recently received a grant of \$840,000 from the State of Minnesota to continue SHIP activities and a federal grant of \$185,000 from the Centers for Disease Control to further support these initiatives.

SHIP funding has assisted the City in establishing a foundation for these efforts over the last two years – fostering changes in the community, schools, worksites and healthcare settings. But our work has just begun. The City’s public-private collaboration with BCBS will enable us to amplify our work and engage more citizens in making sustainable changes to meet our health goals. For this effort to be successful, we need your help. We want to do our part within our City infrastructure, as well as the broader community, but we hope that residents, schools and businesses will also come onboard and commit to making Bloomington a healthier place for everyone.

Sign up to stay current on what’s happening with the *do.town* initiative. Scan the QR code *at right* or visit www.do-town.org.



“I’ve always had a personal connection to my work,” she said. “Sitting on a front step with a concerned mom watching traffic, led me to take steps to get traffic reduced. These day-to-day issues are where I think I made the biggest impact.”

Grady, an attorney, has served on a number of boards and committees in Bloomington, including the Bloomington Charter Commission, Bloomington Planning Commission and Chamber of Commerce. Grady will continue to make an impact through her work as commissioner on the Bloomington Port Authority. Yet, she will miss serving on the City Council.

“Part of what’s neat about being a councilmember is the ability to drive around town and know exactly what’s going on,” Grady said. “I’ll miss being in the loop, but most of all, I will miss the people and the City staff. The integrity of the other councilmembers and a desire to give back was what first inspired me to run while my four sons were still in school.”

With fewer obligations and her nest empty, Grady plans on spending more time pursuing hobbies such as cooking, gardening and playing the oboe. Recently, Grady took a vacation to Italy.

“I hope there will be more travel with my husband in the future,” she said. “It’s a new chapter in our lives.”

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Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.